



**(U) Generally Speaking: Iraq -- Worth All The Effort!**

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*Thoughts on the situation in Iraq (U)*

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(U//FOUO) Many times in our work, we can toil away at a huge pile of data or issues and not see the fruits of our labors for weeks, months, or years. We then become frustrated and begin to ask -- "Is this really worth it? Are we doing the right thing here?" Then suddenly, there will be a breakthrough and the results are so important and positive that we wonder how we could have ever doubted that we were doing the right thing.

(S//SI) For nearly three years, the U.S. SIGINT System (USSS) has been working at a tough problem -- supporting our war efforts in Iraq. We are bombarded with negative news coverage that paints a "can't win" story, and I imagine that at some point many of us had a moment where we asked -- "Is this really worth it?" Yes, the U.S. SIGINT system has had successes in the war effort, but at some point amid all the difficulties in Iraq, and all the negative reporting, it is only natural to wonder if these successes might be futile.

(U//FOUO) For me, watching the Iraqi election coverage on TV Sunday afternoon reaffirmed that we are doing the right thing in Iraq. It was a very emotional day for me personally as I witnessed Iraqi citizens celebrating democracy. I think they proved that exercising democratic freedom and being an active participant in the direction of government is part of human nature. It was a great day for Iraq, and a great day for the United States as well. I believe it clearly demonstrates that what we are doing in Iraq is very important, and absolutely necessary.

(U//FOUO) Thanks to all of you who have worked so hard over the last several months to help ensure this successful turn of events in Iraq. And no matter where you work in the USSS, thanks for all you do to serve our nation and protect its democratic ideals.

(U//FOUO) We obviously still have a long way to go in Iraq, and many more hurdles to overcome. However, as evidenced by the events in Iraq on Sunday, we have accomplished a great deal. For a moment, we can take off our rucksack, and know that we can and will make it to the finish line -- and fully understand that our efforts are truly meaningful and definitely "worth it."

   
(U) *Woman votes in Basra (Reuters)* (U) *Voting in Najaf (Reuters)*

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